



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

2020 Annual Report

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2020

JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020



When the pandemic began, no one could have predicted the level of need that was to come.



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

I have the privilege to submit the 2020 annual report for the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). Our commitment has always been to provide services to Mississippians seeking employment assistance. This report highlights the programs and services the agency provided to Mississippians during FY 2020.

My team at MDES exceeded my expectations last year. When the pandemic began, no one could have predicted the level of need that was to come. In a video to staff in March 2020, I said, "I know in the uncertain days ahead that you will do all that you can to help Mississippians who are probably not going to be working or laid off from their jobs for a while, and they are going to need our help." My team did just that.

MDES leaders identified staff at MDES who had Unemployment Insurance (UI) experience to assist with the inconceivable number of claims. MDES leaders also identified staff that could be shifted into necessary roles to assist with the workload. As time went on, it was clear more staff would be needed. WIN Job Center teams that primarily focus on assisting Mississippians in finding a job, took on the additional challenge of helping input and answer questions about unemployment claims.

I'm proud to say that Mississippi was one of the first in the nation to pay UI benefits to claimants at the beginning of the pandemic. With the help of our team, the Governor's office, and partners, we worked tirelessly to get this done and assist Mississippians in their time of need.

With the assistance of the Governor's Office, MDES was able to enact provisions to reduce barriers from unsystematic circumstances, allowing those filing for unemployment assistance to receive their benefits promptly. We are grateful to the Governor and his team for working closely with us through the pandemic.

MDES administers federally-funded programs aimed at assisting the citizens of the great state of Mississippi: Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services including Wagner Peyser and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, and Labor Market Information. By sharing the MDES Annual Report of 2020 with you, I ask that you take notice of these programs. The reports detail descriptions of goals based on national standards, achievements in performance measures, and strategies for each of the program areas.

Since the pandemic, we are investing funds to increase efficiency and create new capabilities that will generate higher-quality service for our customers.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's MDES Annual Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline A. Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline A. Turner
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the lead workforce agency for the state of Mississippi. Our mission, *Helping Mississippians Get Jobs*, is taken seriously by our Executive Director and all staff at MDES. During the unprecedented time of a global pandemic, the needs of Mississippians changed overnight, and MDES shifted focus to helping Mississippians through this challenging time. This year's annual report shows how the agency implemented strategies and tools to help Mississippians find work and provide employment assistance at the utmost important time. Our MDES State Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report will further guide you through our endeavors of the year and give insight into many of the programs and services we provide to help Mississippians. The following is a summary of what to expect in our report.



From our local **WIN Job Centers**, through our office of **Job Connections**, MDES worked with our partners and staff throughout the state to serve Mississippians with employment assistance. The **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** assists employers hiring individuals who face barriers to employment. A total of 31,302 WOTC applications were certified from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, with a total of \$78,226,800 in potential tax credits to employers. In E-Verify services, a total of 26,585 were provided to employers from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. Utilizing our network of partners and localized teams, MDES continues to work to help Mississippians get back into the workforce. The **Governor's Job Fair Network** and local WIN Job Centers hosted a total of 359 events statewide that served 589 employers between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020. The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**, along with core partners, worked with Mississippi in designing and developing a centralized system called the "WIOA Hub." This Hub plays a key role in allowing agencies to refer customers electronically with the goal that, no one falls through the process. MDES increased the number of referrals into the "WIOA Hub" to 32,209. The "WIOA Hub" referrals were increased to MDES to 40,054,

all during FY 2020. We utilized the **Mississippi Apprenticeship Program** that has shown to be life-changing, providing more sustainable wages and promoting a better quality of life for many Mississippians with a total of 2,168 apprenticeships from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

COVID-19 caused mass layoffs and devastated the state and its workforce. During FY 2020, the **Rapid Response (RR)** team provided services to 19,989 employees and 142 businesses that were affected by layoffs or closures. When the pandemic struck, MDES strategized with our Reemployment team and retrained staff to assist Mississippians with their employment issues to quickly get them back into the workforce. The **Office of Reemployment Assistance (ORA)** encompasses the departments associated with administering the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program which involves covered employers paying taxes into the **UI Trust Fund**. It provides persons who have become unemployed through no fault of their own, the opportunity to file claims for benefits to be paid out of this fund. During FY 2020, MDES processed a total of 413,909 unemployment claims and 2,797,153 weekly certifications and a total of \$399,752,978 benefits were paid in unemployment assistance.

MDES combated fraud with the help of local, state, and national law enforcement agencies. A wide variety of recovery mechanisms were utilized to recoup improper payments and reimburse the **Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund**. MDES developed the **ReStart MS** system for the business community. ReStartMS works in tandem with our UI system to provide employers with information about initial claims filed and employees presently filing. The system streamlines the process for employers to submit information in mass to report fraudulent claims, rehires, and refusals of work. Mississippi was 1st in the nation with a 99.1% score in Nonmonetary Determinations Timeliness for the quarter ending December 31, 2019. Then COVID-19 appeared, and the workload surged to phenomenal levels, seemingly overnight.

We provided **Labor Market Information** to our job seekers and employers to help them understand the current employment situation in the state of Mississippi. The agency is proud of our 2020 service to Mississippians.

MDES is fully committed to the restoration of pre-COVID services and performance levels as we continue to navigate this unprecedented environment.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS AND WIN JOB CENTERS

Combining federal, state, and community workforce programs and services, the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi creates a system that is both convenient and user-friendly. A comprehensive network of **WIN Job Centers** is located throughout the state.

The centers offer a variety of employment services to ensure all job seekers have the resources and tools needed to secure gainful employment. The services include job placement assistance, referral to training, priority of service for veterans, career counseling, and referrals to many other workforce partner programs. WIN Job Centers reach out to the business community to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.



WIN Job Center locations are subject to change. Some locations are part-time offices. A complete listing of offices and their hours can be found online at mdes.ms.gov

Amory

662-256-2618 and
662-256-5617
1619 Highland Drive
P.O. Box 415
Amory, MS 38821-0415

Attala County

662-289-2535
254 Hwy 12 West
Kosciusko, MS 39090

Batesville

662-360-1236
103 Woodland Road #16
P.O. Box 1511
Batesville, MS 38606-1511

Brookhaven

601-833-3511
545 Brookway Blvd.
P.O. Box 790
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0790

Calhoun County

662-412-3170
237 S. Murphree Street
Pittsboro, MS 38951

Carthage

601-267-9282
202 C.O. Brooks St.
Carthage, MS 39051-4262

Choctaw, MS

601-663-7722
266 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350

Clarksdale

662-624-9001
236 Sharkey Ave., 3rd floor
Federal Building
P.O. Box 640
Clarksdale, MS 38614-0640

Cleveland

662-843-2704
119 N. Commerce Ave.
P.O. Box 1750
Cleveland, MS 38732-1750

Columbia

601-736-2628
1111 Highway 98
Columbia, MS 39429-3701

Corinth

662-696-2336
2759 S. Harper Road
Corinth, MS 38834-2050

Desoto County

662-280-6218
NWCC Desoto Campus
WIN Job Center Room # 300-L
5197 W. E. Ross Parkway
Southaven, MS 38671

Forest

601-469-2851
536 Deer Field Drive
Forest, MS 39074-6005

Greenville

662-332-8101
Delta Plaza Shopping Center
800 Martin Luther King Blvd.,
Suite C54
P.O. Box 5279
Greenville, MS 38704-5279

Greenwood

662-459-4600
812 W. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 554
Greenwood, MS 38935-0554

Grenada

662-226-2911
1229-A Sunset Drive
Grenada, MS 38901

Gulfport

228-897-6900
10162 Southpark Drive
P.O. Box 2849
Gulfport, MS 39505-2849

Hancock County

228-466-5425
856 Hwy 90 Suite D
Bay St Louis, MS 39520

Hattiesburg

601-584-1202
1911 Arcadia Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5428

Houston

662-407-1219
210 S. Monroe St.
Houston, MS 38851

Indianola

662-887-2502
226 N. Martin Luther King Drive
P.O. Box 963
Indianola, MS 38751-0963

Iuka

662-423-9231
1107 Maria Lane
Iuka, MS 38852-1120

Jackson

601-446-3296 or 601-446-3549
5959 I-55 N, Frontage Road,
Suite C
Jackson, MS 39213

Laurel

601-399-4000
2139 Highway 15 N, Suite D
Laurel, MS 39440

Lexington

662-834-2426
303 Yazoo Street
Lexington, MS 39095

Louisville

662-773-5051
790 N. Court Ave.
Louisville, MS 39339-2059

Madison County

601-859-7609
152 Watford Parkway Drive
P.O. Box 450
Canton, MS 39046-0450

Marshall County Workforce Training Center

662-851-4190, 662-851-4191,
& 662-851-4192
4700 Cayce Road
Byhalia, MS 38611

Mayhew

662-243-1751
8731 South Frontage Rd
Mayhew, MS 39753

McComb

601-684-4421
1400-A Harrison Avenue
P.O. Box 1306
McComb, MS 39648

Mendenhall

601-847-1322
150 W. Court Ave.
Mendenhall, MS 39114-3550

Meridian

601-553-9511
2000 Highway 19 N
Meridian, MS 39307-4906

Natchez

601-442-0243
107 Colonel John
Pitchford Parkway
P.O. Box 810
Natchez, MS 39121-0810

Noxubee County

662-726-5220
198 Washington Street
Macon, MS 39341

New Albany

662-407-1226
301 North St.
New Albany, MS 38652

Newton

601-683-2021
107 Adams St.
Newton, MS 39345-2642

Oxford

662-236-7201
1310 Belk Blvd.
Oxford, MS 38655

Pascagoula

228-762-4713
1604 Denny Ave.
P.O. Box 1058
Pascagoula, MS 39568-1058

Pearl

601-321-5441
212 Saint Paul St.
Pearl, MS 39208-5134

Philadelphia

601-389-3431
1016 Saxon Airport Road
Philadelphia, MS 39350

Picayune

601-798-3472
2005 Wildwood Road
Picayune, MS 39466

Pontotoc

662-407-1226
316 Coffee Street
Pontotoc, MS 38863

Tate County

662-562-3351
NW Community College
4975 Highway 51 N
Senatobia, MS 38668

Tupelo

662-842-4371 and
662-407-1213
3200 Adams Farm Road,
Suite 4
Belden, MS 38826

Tylertown

601-222-2161
200 Ball Ave., Courthouse
Tylertown, MS 39667-2170

Vicksburg

601-619-2841
755 Hwy 27 S.
Vicksburg, MS 39180

West Point

662-243-2647
1899 East TVA Rd
West Point, MS 39773

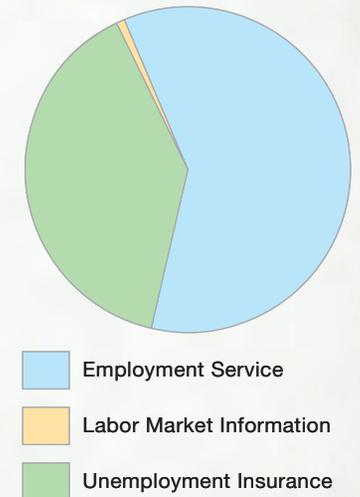
FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures by Program

Program	Personal Service	Travel	Contractual Service	Commodities	Capital Outlay other than equipment	Capital Outlay Equipment	Vehicles	Subsidies, Loans, and Grants	Total Expenditure
Employment Service	\$8,722,513.00	\$218,321.00	\$7,348,999.00	\$147,913.00	\$0.00	\$16,446.00	\$0.00	\$40,370,090.00	\$56,824,282.00
Labor Market Information	\$565,688.00	\$10,261.00	\$104,259.00	\$6,126.00	\$0.00	\$11,631.00	\$0.00	\$1,660.00	\$699,625.00
Unemployment Insurance	\$15,860,528.00	\$187,054.00	\$20,048,410.00	\$579,049.00	\$0.00	\$471,828.00	\$94,400.00	\$(47,552.00)	\$37,193,717.00
TOTAL	\$25,148,729.00	\$415,636.00	\$27,501,668.00	\$733,088.00	\$0.00	\$499,905.00	\$94,400.00	\$40,324,198.00	\$94,717,624.00

Source of Funding by Program

Program	Federal	State	Other	Total
Employment Service	\$53,243,357.00	\$0.00	\$3,580,925.00	\$56,824,282.00
Labor Market Information	\$699,625.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$699,625.00
Unemployment Insurance	\$28,958,678.00	\$0.00	\$8,235,039.00	\$37,193,717.00
TOTAL	\$82,901,660.00	\$0.00	\$11,815,964.00	\$94,717,624.00



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Performance Information

The following tables show attainment rates on each performance measure for the state as a whole and for each of the four local workforce development areas. Each year, Mississippi negotiates attainment rates on each common performance measure with the U. S. Department of Labor. All of the data in Mississippi’s WIOA performance reports is uniformly reported and validated in accordance with federal requirements.



MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE

STATEWIDE REPORTED INFORMATION	NEGOTIATED LEVEL	ACTUAL LEVEL
Adult Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	75.0%	86.2%
Adult Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	72.0%	85.3%
Adult Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,200	\$6,262
Adult Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	48.0%	79.4%
Adult Measurable Skill Gain	Baseline	44.4%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	70.0%	77.8%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.0%	77.0%
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,007	\$5,569
Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	48.0%	67.8%
Dislocated Worker Measurable Skill Gain	Baseline	44.9%
Youth Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.0%	77.3%
Youth Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	69.7%	80.3%
Youth Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	70.5%	86.7%
Youth Measurable Skill Gain	Baseline	62.4%
Youth Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	Baseline	\$2,888
Wagner Peyser Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.0%	70.9%
Wagner Peyser Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	65.3%	68.9%
Wagner Peyser Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,900	\$4,238

Job Connections

A Wagner Peyser

The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program focuses on providing a variety of services, including job search assistance, help getting a job referral and placement assistance for job seekers.

B Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) initiative in Mississippi provides intensive career services to reconnect Unemployment Insurance beneficiaries with work as quickly as possible. RESEA participants receive a minimum of two one-on-one assessments and career counseling sessions.

Each session assists the participant by providing labor market information, job match and skills gap analysis, and soft skills training. RESEA participants are also provided practical job search tips, targeted work search assistance and job referrals. From July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, RESEA completed 5,147 counseling sessions.

C E-Verify

The Mississippi Legislature, in the 2008 Legislative session, passed the *Mississippi Employment Protection Act*. This act requires employers to participate in the Department of Homeland Security E-Verify program. Part of the legislation provides a mechanism to make the verification process easier for employers by using the services offered by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). A total of 26,565 E-Verify services were provided to employers from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

D Temporary Agricultural Worker Programs

Mississippi Department of Employment Security manages the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and H2-A Certification for Temporary Agricultural Worker programs. The MSFW program provides outreach and basic labor exchange services to those identified as migrant or seasonal farmworkers. The H2-A program helps employers recruit temporary alien workers when qualified U.S. workers are not available.

E Job Fair Network

Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) operates the Governor's Job Fair Network. The Governor's Job Fair Network is a series of community-sponsored, one-day events that bring together a diverse group of employers who are actively looking for employees. MDES works in partnership with other agencies and organizations to host each event. There were 14 Governor's Job Fair events from July 1, 2019, until June 30, 2020, which served 306 employers/organizations.

In addition to the Governor's Job Fair Network events, 345 job fairs were held at many WIN Job Centers for individual employers during the same time frame.

F Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain individuals who have historically faced significant barriers to employment.

A
JOB ORDERS RECEIVED **103,517**
JOB OPENINGS RECEIVED **212,534**

B
RESEA COUNSELING SESSIONS COMPLETED **5,147**

C
E-VERIFY SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS **26,565**

D
FOREIGN LABOR HOUSING INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED **466**
H2-A JOB LISTINGS **1,019**

E
JOB FAIR NETWORK EVENTS **359**
EMPLOYER'S SERVED AT JOB FAIR NETWORK EVENTS **589**

F
WOTC APPLICATIONS CERTIFIED **31,302**
POTENTIAL TAX CREDITS TO EMPLOYERS **\$78,226,800**

Job Connections Success Story Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment

Antonio O'Neal was laid off from his job at Petco, due to a store closure in December of 2019. He had worked for the company for over fourteen years as a Retail Sales Associate. He was a loyal and dedicated employee, and the news came as a shock since he thought he would work his way into retirement with Petco. He was over sixty years old at the time of his layoff and he had only planned to work a few more years. Mr. O'Neal needed to return to work quickly and began actively seeking new employment. Unable to find a new job right away, Mr. O'Neal had to file for Unemployment Insurance in late January.

But something in his favor happened;

Mr. O'Neal was selected to participate in the **Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)** program. He reported to the **Gulfport WIN Job Center** for his first appointment on February 21, 2020, and was immediately assigned a case manager to help him return to work quickly.

The case manager conducted an initial assessment of his skills and abilities. During his orientation to the services offered at the WIN Job Center, he was referred to the **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College G.E.D. Tutoring program** where he was informed about grants for retraining opportunities. Mr. O'Neal was interested in the tutoring program but his immediate goal was still to return to work because he needed to replace his income as soon as possible. During the RESEA meeting, he was referred to seven different job opportunities.

One of the job opportunities was with a federal contractor, A.A. Food Service, at **Keesler Air Force Base** as kitchen personnel. After discussing interview tips with his case manager, Mr. O'Neal applied for the job. On March 6, he learned he had passed all tests and screening processes for employment at A.A. Food Service. He was hired to start work on March 10, at \$14.16 an hour, up from the \$11.50 an hour he was making at Petco for the last 14 years. He would also be receiving a benefits package that included healthcare, paid vacation, pension, and sick pay. His new job resulted in an upgrade in pay and benefits.

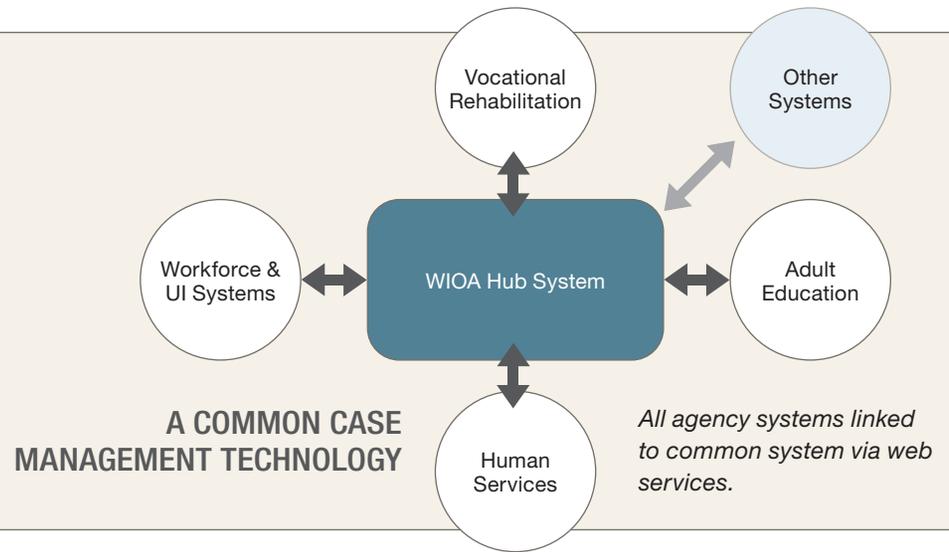
Mr. O'Neal was still employed at A.A. Food Service as of December 2020.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

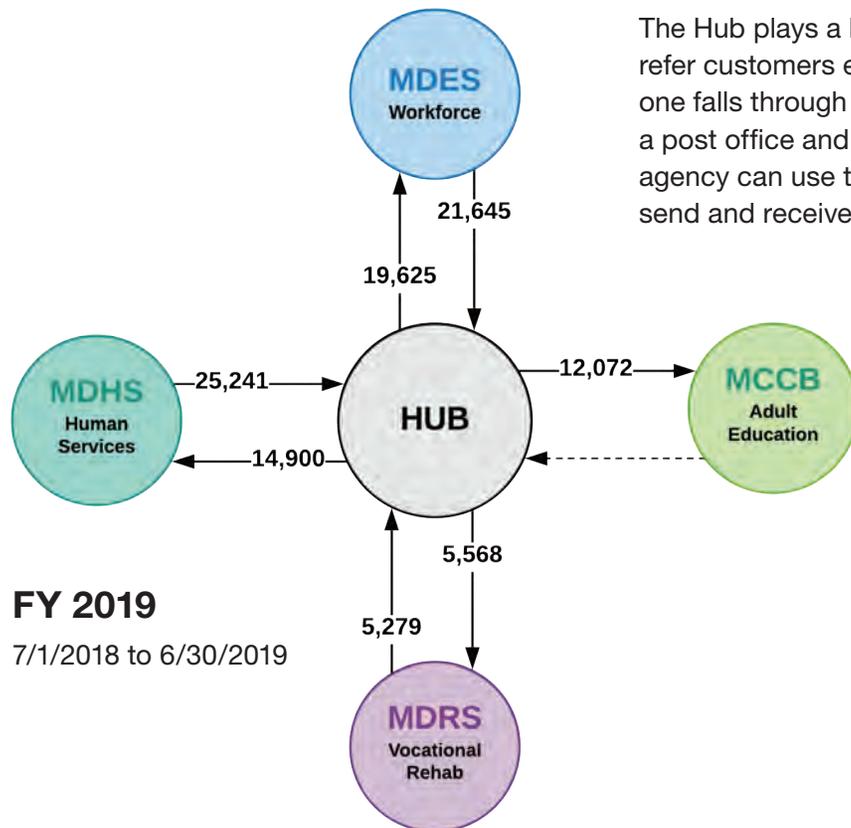
WIOA Hub

Mississippi designed and developed a centralized system called the “WIOA Hub” to assist individuals across the WIOA partner agencies. The Hub allows agencies to work together to ensure that customers get connected to the services they need to succeed. The growth of the WIOA Hub referrals was significant between FY 2019 and FY 2020 as the diagrams below illustrate.



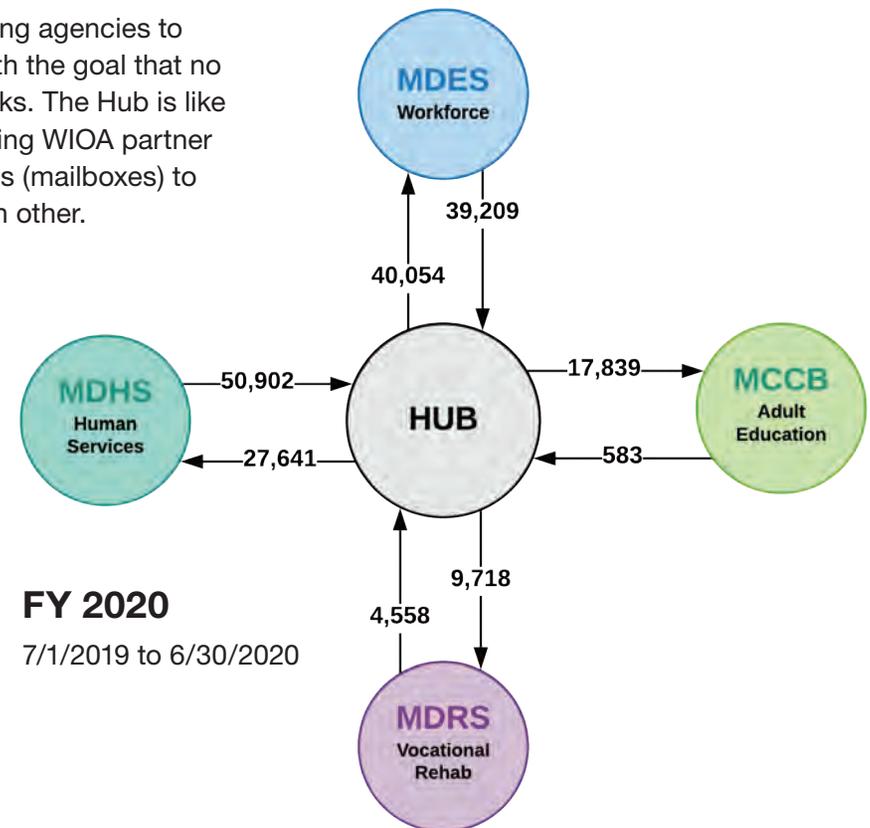
Referrals

The Hub plays a key role in allowing agencies to refer customers electronically, with the goal that no one falls through procedural cracks. The Hub is like a post office and every participating WIOA partner agency can use their own systems (mailboxes) to send and receive referrals to each other.



FY 2019

7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019



FY 2020

7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020

Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP)

The Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) works with community college and industry partners across the state to strengthen the workforce and provide more opportunities for Mississippians to participate in apprenticeship programs. These programs represent a variety of fields such as manufacturing, transportation and logistics, energy and utilities, banking and finance, and more that enable our state's residents to earn a living wage while learning a new skill that could lead to a meaningful career.

As a part of these efforts, MAP works to ensure people of diverse backgrounds learn about and take advantage of these programs across the state.



Rapid Response

Rapid Response (RR) is a required activity carried out in the local workforce development areas (LWDAs) by the collaboration of the LWDAs, State, and area partners. RR establishes methods to provide additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, plant closings, or other dislocation events when such events increase the number of unemployed individuals.



During FY 2020, the RR team provided services to 19,989 EMPLOYEES and 142 BUSINESSES that were affected by layoffs or closures.



Each of the four LWDAs developed a Layoff Aversion Activity Plan to formalize layoff aversion activities and to provide a standard for evaluation.

FY 2020 proved to be a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and required modifications to some policies and procedures to effectively serve employers and employees in the state. COVID-19 caused mass layoffs and devastated the state and its workforce. Going on-site to conduct a RR event was no longer possible and a new strategy was needed. The State RR Team partnered with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Mass Layoff Team to create an innovative procedure for addressing the vast numbers of layoffs by assisting an employer in filing one mass layoff UI claim for all of its employees. Employers were sent the Initial Employer Mass Layoff email as soon as MDES was notified of the layoffs and/or closures. This email included links and attachments that provided all the needed tools and guidelines for the employer to file the mass layoff UI claim, the RR Action Checklist, tools that provided guidance for employees on filing weekly certifications, and FAQs that would be helpful during this time of transition.



UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Performance Information

Core Measures

UI Core Measures	DOL Acceptable Level of Performance	MDES Performance Qtr ending 9/2019	MDES Performance Qtr ending 12/2019	MDES Performance Qtr ending 3/2020	MDES Performance Qtr ending 6/2020
First Payment Promptness	87%	84%	91%	96%	46%
Nonmonetary Determinations Time Lapse	80%	78%	99%	93%	62%
Nonmonetary Separation Quality	75%	93%	92%	n/a waived	n/a waived
Nonmonetary Nonseparation Quality	75%	100%	100%	n/a waived	n/a waived
New Employer Status Determination Time Lapse	70%	86%	83%	80%	80%
Lower Authority Appeals Quality	80%	100%	100%	n/a waived	n/a waived
Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals	<30 days	6.9	7.3	5.6	12.4
Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals	<40days	33.8	13	130	10.2

Unemployment Insurance Performs Core Measures Acceptable Performance Guidelines

BENEFITS MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>First Payment Promptness: % of all 1st payments made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year (excludes Workshare, episodic claims such as DUA, and retroactive payments for a compensable waiting period).</p>	>87%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Time Lapse: % of Nonmonetary Determinations (Separations and Nonseparations) made within 21 days of the date of detection of any nonmonetary issue that had the potential to affect the claimant's benefit rights.</p>	>80%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Nonseparations: % of Nonseparation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of nonseparation determinations.</p>	>75%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations: % of Separation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of separation determinations.</p>	>75%

OVERPAYMENT MEASURE

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Detection of Overpayments: % of detectable, recoverable overpayments estimated by the Benefit Accuracy Measurement survey that were established for recovery.</p>	<p>≥50% and <95% of detectable/ recoverable overpayments are established for recovery</p>
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APPEALS MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals: The sum of the ages, in days from filing, of all pending Lower Authority Appeals divided by the number of Lower Authority Appeals.</p>	<p><30 Days</p>
<p>Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals: The sum of the ages, in days from filing, of all pending Higher Authority Appeals divided by the number of Higher Authority Appeals.</p>	<p><40 Days</p>
<p>Lower Authority Appeals Quality: % of Lower Authority Appeals with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 85% of potential points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of lower authority benefit appeal hearings.</p>	<p>>80%</p>

TAX MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>New Employer Status Determinations Time Lapse: % of New Employer Status Determinations made within 90 days of the last day in the quarter in which the business became liable.</p>	<p>>70%</p>
<p>Tax Quality: Tax Performance System (TPS) assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the tax program determined by scoring, on a pass/fail basis, samples of the 13 tax functions.</p>	<p>No more than 3 tax functions failing TPS in any year</p>
	<p>No single tax function failing for 3 consecutive years</p>

REEMPLOYMENT MEASURE

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Facilitate Reemployment: % of UI claimants who are reemployed within the quarter following the quarter in which they received their first UI payment.</p>	<p>Discontinued in FY 2020</p>
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SECRETARY STANDARDS IN REGULATION

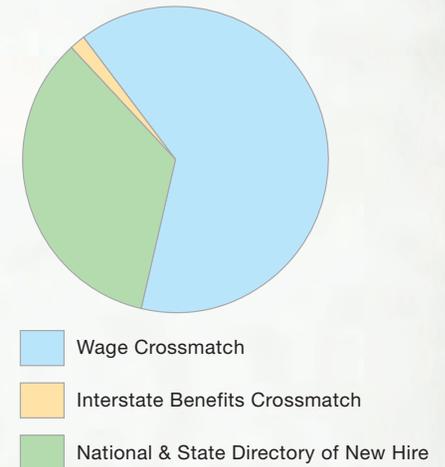
Performance Criteria

<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Intrastate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	>87%
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Intrastate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 35 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	>93%
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Interstate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	>70%
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Interstate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 35 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	>78%
<p>Lower Authority Appeals: % of Lower Authority Appeals decided within 30 days of filing.</p>	>60%
<p>% of Lower Authority Appeals decided within 45 days of filing.</p>	>80%

Fraud Prevention

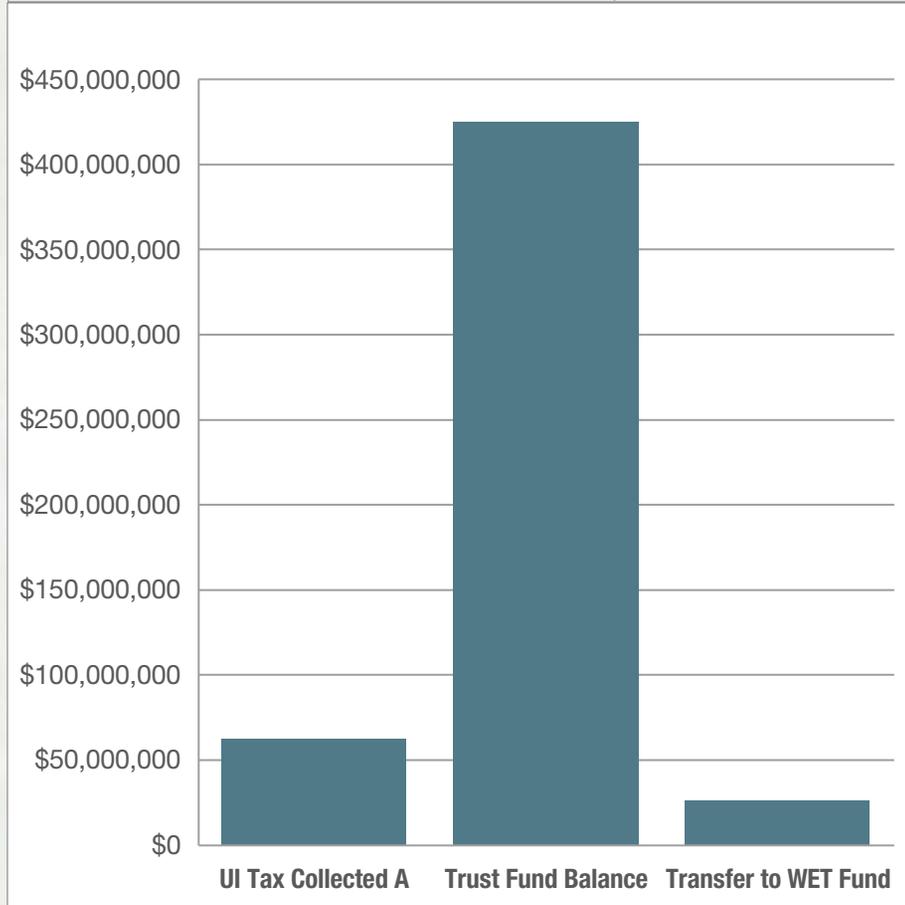
— July 2019 through June 2020 per ETA 227s

Methods of Detection	# Cases Detected	Overpayment Detected
Wage Crossmatch	11,332	\$1,274,540
Interstate Benefits Crossmatch	233	\$33,471
National & State Directory of New Hire	3,187	\$688,815
TOTAL	14,752	\$1,996,826

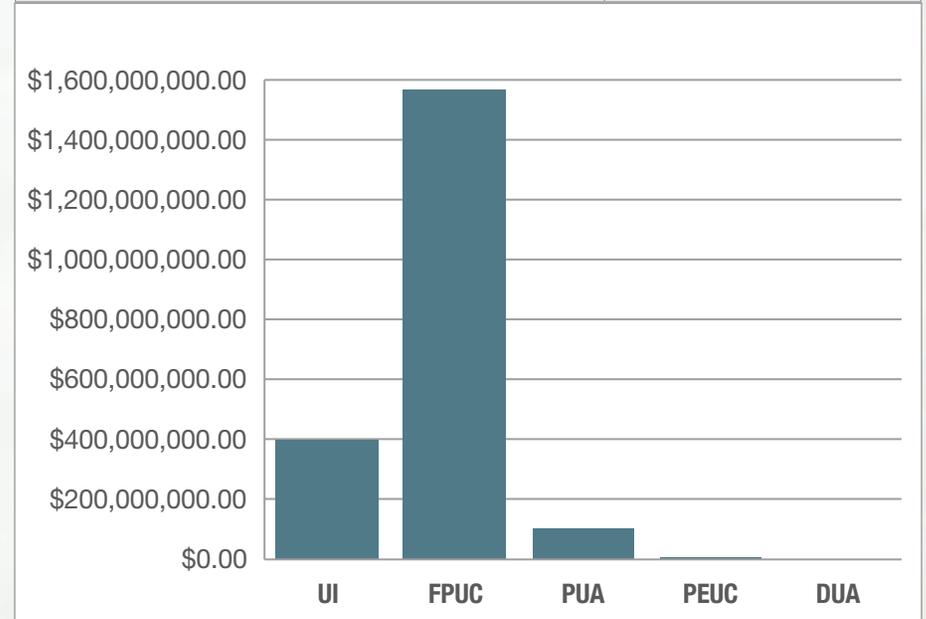


Unemployment Insurance Activities

EMPLOYERS PAYING UI TAX	57,966
UI Tax Collected	\$62,867,508
Trust Fund Balance	\$424,950,769
Transfer to WET Fund	\$26,537,324



UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS FILED	413,909
UI Benefits Paid (Regular UI, Federal and Military)	\$399,752,978
Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)	\$1,568,240,919
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)	\$103,702,705
Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)	\$7,852,823
Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)	\$5,180



Reemployment Assistance

The Office of Reemployment Assistance (ORA) Division encompasses the departments associated with administering the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program which involves covered employers paying taxes into the UI Trust Fund. It provides persons who have become unemployed through no fault of their own the opportunity to file claims for benefits to be paid out of this fund. The responsibility of ORA is to operate this complex program with efficiency and consistency while minimizing improper payments and fraud. This duty requires ongoing analysis and adaptation of processes to effectively combat fraudulent activity and ensure the availability of benefits to eligible recipients. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the course of fiscal year (FY) 2020, requiring an unparalleled response from all state workforce agencies. Mississippi Governor, Tate Reeves, declared a COVID-19 state of emergency on March 14, 2020, and subsequently issued a series of executive orders with provisions temporarily adjusting MDES protocol to help expedite benefit payments and ease the burdens caused by the pandemic on the public and the agency.



PROVISIONS IMPACTING UI PROCESSES INCLUDED:

Waiver One-week waiting period: March 1 – June 27, 2020

Suspension of interest accrual on delinquencies: April 1 – June 27, 2020

Broad interpretation of the requirement of an individual be “able and available” for full-time employment to receive UI benefits

Increase in weekly earnings (allowed prior to UI benefit deductions) \$40 to \$200

Waiver of charges to rated and reimbursable employer accounts for UI benefits paid for weeks of unemployment between March 3, and June 27, 2020

Extension of 1st quarter 2020 payment due dates for rated and reimbursable employers to July 31, 2020

Suspension of penalties for late reports and contributions between March 3, and July 31, 2020

Waiver of work registration requirement: March 3, - June 27, 2020

Benefit eligibility determined on an individual’s last job separation, only for claims filed between March 8, and September 26, 2020

Though temporary provisions were put in place to facilitate prompt response to Mississippians in need of assistance, these and other actions were taken to address the pandemic workload that will ultimately impact MDES processes for years to come. MDES had to quickly implement contingency plans to manage unprecedented claims levels including repurposing non-UI staff, hiring new staff, and the addition of external contact center facilities. The UI program is complex under normal conditions, but with the addition of the benefit programs established through the CARES Act legislation, training individuals with little or no UI experience to assist with even basic UI processes is an extraordinary challenge.

THE CARES ACT CREATED THE FOLLOWING BENEFIT PROGRAMS FOR UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS:

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Each new program had specific federal guidelines for administration with 3 actions:

1. Interpreted;
2. Programmed into our operating system; and
3. Taught to staff.

As a result of the increased pandemic unemployment rate, Mississippi additionally triggered “Extended Benefits” in May. This federal program was previously established for states to provide extended benefits in periods of high unemployment. With multiple programs in effect, a specified program hierarchy must be adhered to and eligibility is checked weekly to ensure any benefits paid are issued from the proper program.

To most effectively meet the needs of Mississippians, MDES increased its hours of operation to fifteen (15) hour days seven (7) days a week and have only recently begun to slowly transition back toward pre-pandemic schedules. MDES had to make these changes quickly and in a manner conducive to protecting the health and safety of its employees. The COVID-19 pandemic will forever change the landscape of MDES operations.

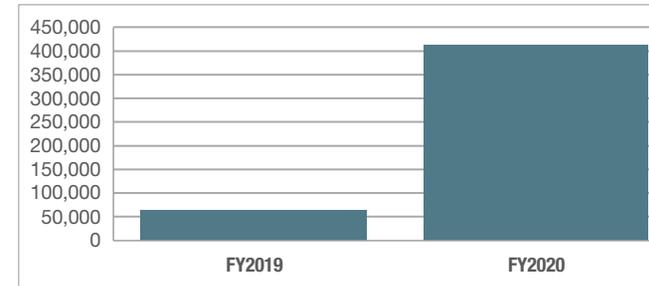
In light of the economic impact to workers and employers from COVID-19, collection activities were suspended and the tax due date for the quarter ending March 31, 2020, was extended to the end of July, resulting in a decreased collection of current and delinquent monies in FY 2020. Legislation was passed in July 2020, to lessen the impact to some Mississippi employers for COVID related UI benefits paid through the remainder of the calendar year 2020. The CARES Act provided partial relief of charges for other Mississippi employers who would be required to reimburse the trust fund for COVID-related UI benefits paid through December 2020.

FY 2020

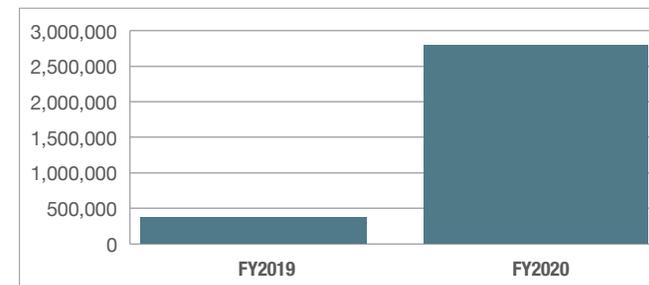
UI in PERSPECTIVE

During FY 2020, MDES processed a total of 413,909 unemployment claims and 2,797,153 weekly certifications. To provide perspective regarding the effect of the pandemic, in FY 2019 MDES only processed 64,887 unemployment claims and 367,851 weekly certifications which is comparable to workload levels in prior years. Between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020, MDES paid a total of \$399,752,978 in unemployment assistance benefits.

Total UI Claims Processed
FY 2019 **64,887** / FY 2020: **413,909**



Total Weekly Certifications
FY 2019: **367,851** / FY 2020: **2,797,153**



Total Unemployment Assistance Benefits Paid

\$399,752,978



State workforce agencies saw wages as a constant battle with improper payments and fraudulent activity under normal conditions. The ORA Benefit Payment Control and Integrity Department at MDES manages a vigorous hyperpayment and fraudulent activity program that is continually assessing and adjusting techniques to try and keep pace with emerging deceitful schemes to wrongfully obtain UI benefits.

Alliances with public and private entities are ongoing to provide multi-level identity and wage verification processes. Implementation of the CARES Act benefit programs brought about a surge of fraudulent activity nationally, and Mississippi was not immune to this blight. These fraudulent actions include identity theft, false information by persons using their own identity, and failure to report earnings in an attempt to improperly obtain benefits. The self-attestation of eligibility associated with some of the CARES Act programs created new challenges in combatting improper payments. MDES continually advances its processes and automation to prevent, deter, and detect fraudulent activity and improper payments. Coordination with local, state, and national workforce partners has been instrumental in staying abreast of emerging schemes, progressive deterrent measures, and best practices. MDES partners with state and

national law enforcement entities to pursue prosecution action against individuals involved in criminal activity. A wide variety of recovery mechanisms are utilized to recoup improper payments and reimburse the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Some methods include voluntary repayment, benefit offset, garnishment, state and/or federal tax intercept, and Interstate Reciprocal Overpayment Recovery Arrangement. We take great pride in being good stewards of the UI Trust Fund for Mississippi and continually strive to enhance our performance in this role.



FY 2020, Reemployment was a common goal. MDES engaged employers to explore needs to assist them with reporting requirements which allowed them to focus on reopening business operations. In response, we developed an online system: ReStart MS. This system is for the business community that works in tandem with our UI system. ReStart MS provides employers with information regarding initial claims filed and, employees presently filing to aid in monitoring claims activity related to their account. It streamlines the process for employers to submit information in mass to report fraudulent claims, rehires, and refusals of work. Timely reporting of this information helps minimize improper unemployment payments which benefit all parties.



Mississippi maintained strong program performance scores in the US Department of Labor (USDOL) Core Measure categories as we began 2020. Mississippi was 1st in the nation with a 99.1% score in Nonmonetary Determinations Timeliness for the quarter ending December 31, 2019. Then COVID-19 appeared, and the workload surged to phenomenal levels, seemingly overnight. Procedures, not primary to claims processing, were suspended and staff were trained and reassigned to assist with claims-taking, and high call volume. The disruption to normal operations, along with the deluge of claims and subsequent eligibility investigations, have and will continue to impact program performance indefinitely. The preliminary adverse effects of this workload surge on performance appeared in the scores for the quarter ending June 30, 2020. First payment promptness and nonmonetary determination time lapse, which are closely associated with new claims, were the first performance areas to be affected. While these performance areas have begun to trend upward, as the massive workload progressed from initial phases into secondary stages of processing; other areas such as Appeals performance will subsequently be affected. MDES is fully committed to the restoration of pre-COVID services and performance levels as we continue to navigate this unprecedented environment.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Performance Information

Labor Market Information (LMI) at Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the department that reports information on the number of people employed or unemployed, unemployment rates, average wages, population, income, occupational projections, and other economic variables for Mississippi. The LMI Department, through federal grants with the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment and Training Administration, operates statistical programs to capture and report economic information.

The purpose of LMI and its publications is to aid our customers in identifying the workforce information available and to direct them to the data source that most appropriately meets their needs. A list of LMI Publications follows:

A Current Employment Statistics provides monthly estimates of employment, hours, and earnings by industry for the state. Estimates were published each month in *“State & Metro Trends.”*

B Local Area Unemployment Statistics provides monthly estimates of civilian labor force, employed people, unemployed people, and unemployment rates for the state, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and select cities.

C Occupational Employment Statistics provides occupational employment and wage estimates for wage and salary workers annually for the state and metropolitan statistical areas. The annual estimates were published in *“Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.”*

D Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages provides data of employment and wages by industry for the state and counties. The Enhanced Quarterly Unemployment Insurance file was submitted each quarter before the deadline. Estimates of annual average employment and annual average wages by industry for the state and counties were published in *“Covered Employment and Wages.”*

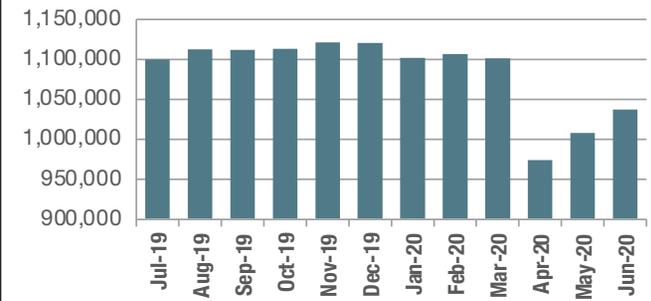
Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries provides a count of all fatal work injuries for the state. Data was gathered to identify, verify and describe fatal work injuries in the state. Counts of fatal work injuries were produced by gender, age, race, occupation, and industry.

The Annual Economic Analysis report was published in *“Reflections.”* The report provided data for the state, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and workforce development areas on population, labor force, employment by industry, per capita income, and sales tax revenues. An Index of Economic Stability was generated by area.

“Industry and Occupational Projections” forecast employment by industry or occupation. Short-term projections for the period 2019 to 2021 were produced for the state. Long-term industry and occupational projections for the period 2018 to 2028 were created for the state.

Descriptions of statistical programs operated by the LMI Department and the monthly state and local area employment and unemployment data can be found online at www.mdes.ms.gov/lmi

Mississippi Covered Employment
Under the MS Employment Security Law



July 2019	1,100,148	January 2020	1,102,097
August 2019	1,112,895	February 2020	1,106,396
September 2019 ..	1,111,841	March 2020	1,101,571
October 2019	1,113,551	April 2020	974,477
November 2019 ...	1,121,053	May 2020	1,007,805
December 2019 ..	1,120,308	June 2020	1,037,575

A CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
(Estimates disseminated each year) **48**

B LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
(Documents generated per year) **4,112**

C OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
(Employers surveyed per year) **3,993**

D QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT & WAGES
(Average units edited each quarter) **73,931**

INFORMATION REQUESTS
(Includes documents downloaded from the website) **27,570**



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Helping Mississippians Get Jobs

601-493-9427 | mdes.ms.gov

An equal opportunity employer and program, MDES has auxiliary aids and services available upon request to those with disabilities.

Those needing TTY assistance may call 800-582-2233.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.